

# Alabama Board of Nursing: Discipline 2015 - 2020

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# Objectives

- Identify the total number of nurses disciplined by license type over the last five years in Alabama.
- Identify the types of licensure actions categories for discipline received by Alabama nurses.
- Identify the violation type by RNs and LPNs indicative of the 469 substandard nursing practice violations.

# BACKGROUND

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ABN staff conducted a 5-year review of ABN licensee discipline data to review licensee types receiving discipline, as well as the type of discipline received.

This presentation reflects a five-year summary of discipline data for nurses in Alabama. The data review consisted of a NURSIS query of discipline data entered by Alabama Board of Nursing staff. These included nurses who received disciplinary action in Alabama from January 2015, through June 2020.

The query results identified 3,152 instances where a nurse, who was licensed by the Alabama Board of Nursing, received public disciplinary action between January 2015, through June 2020.

The disciplinary action reviewed included Voluntary Surrenders, Reprimands, Denial of Initial Licensure, Probation, Suspension, and Revocations.

# Licensure breakdown of 3,152 occurrences

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License	Total occurrence by licensure	Percentage out of the 3,152
Registered Nurse	2,051	65%
Licensed Practical Nurse	1,093	35%
Applicant for initial licensure as a Registered Nurse	7	0.2%
Applicant for initial licensure as a Licensed Practical Nurse	1	0.03%

# Advanced Practice out of 2,051 occurrence of discipline for RNs

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APRN Certification	Total number per APRN	Percentage out of 2,051 occurrences for RNs
Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner	102	5%
Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist	44	2%
Clinical Nurse Specialist	2	0.1%
Certified Nurse Midwife	0	0%

# Top 5 types of disciplinary action received

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Disciplinary Action	Number of disciplinary Actions per discipline type	Percentage of disciplinary action per 3,152
Reprimand	915	29%
Voluntary Surrender	782	25%
Probation	773	25%
Suspension (some followed by Probation)	395	13%
Revocation	249	8%

# Top 10 disciplinary categories

Disciplinary category/ Nurse	Number of occurrences
1. Substance abuse, impairment, unauthorized dispensing/prescribing of medications, diversion, or drug screen violations.	567
2. Substandard or inadequate care	469
3. Unprofessional conduct	375
4. Arrest, conviction, or criminal conviction.	338
5. Violation or failure to comply with the licensing Board Order	302
6. License revocation, license denial, or voluntary surrender of the license.	300
7. Fraud, deceit, failure to disclose, or filing false reports.	271
8. Illegal practice, practicing without a license, or practicing with an expired license.	241
9. Practicing beyond the scope of practice	72
10. Patient abandonment, patient abuse, misappropriation of patient or other property, non-sexual dual or boundary violation or boundary violation.	62

# Discipline Year 2015 through June 2020

When the number of occurrences were compared to the total number of nurses licensed in Alabama for each of these years, the percentage of nurses who received disciplinary action was found to be less than 1%.

Year	Number of occurrences
2015	511
2016	657
2017	523
2018	562
2019	615
2020 (January through June only)	284



# Top 5 disciplinary categories by licensed type

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## RN Discipline

Disciplinary category/ Nurse Practice Act Violations	Number of occurrences
Substance abuse, impairment, unauthorized dispensing/prescribing, diversion, or drug screen violations	402
Substandard or inadequate care	263
Unprofessional conduct	218
Arrest, conviction, or criminal conviction	204
Violation or failure to comply with the licensing Board Order	228

## LPN Discipline

Disciplinary category/ Nurse Practice Act Violation	Number of occurrences
Substance abuse, impairment, unauthorized dispensing/prescribing, diversion, or drug screen violations.	165
Substandard or inadequate care	206
Unprofessional conduct	157
Arrest, conviction, or criminal conviction	134
Illegal practice, practicing without or with an expired license	84

# Top Substandard Nursing Practice Violations by Registered Nurses of the 263 (out of 469) occurrences

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113 Occurrences of  
Failure to account for  
Controlled Substances

55 Occurrences of  
False Documentation

34 Occurrences of  
Failure to provide  
care/treatment

23 Occurrences of  
Medication errors

# Top Substandard Nursing Practice Violations by Licensed Practical Nurses out of the 206 (out of 469) occurrences

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83 occurrences of  
Failure to account  
for Controlled  
Substances

31 Occurrences of  
False Documentation

30 Occurrences of  
Failure to provide  
treatment or care

33 occurrences of  
Medication Errors

# Summary

This brief review was conducted to look at Alabama nursing Discipline data over the past five years. The goal was to look for disciplinary trends and to identify any major common nursing practice outliers.

As the data analysis progressed, board staff included a breakdown of the 469 substandard nursing practice violation categories by licensee type of RN and LPN (Slides 10 and 11). The results of the substandard breakout did not reveal any major outliers. The common substandard practice issues identified were documentation, medication errors, as well as failure to provide treatment, and account for controlled substances.